



COCO TIMES ENDORSES GANG INJUNCTIONS

May 27, 2010

In case you miss these two articles they are pretty significant. The local newspaper is starting to look at gangs and efforts to stop them. In Santa Cruz, the Catholic Diocese took an important step last March with their Covenant (see below) which has led to the establishment of an Interdenominational Faith Initiative that formed this past week.

CONTRA COSTA TIMES EDITORIAL: GANG INJUNCTION IS A TOOL WORTH TRYING IN OAKLAND.

MediaNews editorial

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OAKLAND CITY Attorney John Russo has requested an injunction – essentially a restraining order – against 19 adults who law enforcement officials allege are connected with a violent North Oakland gang.

In 2009, according to law enforcement officials, so-called North Side Oakland gang members were implicated in seven murders. One of those on the city's injunction list accidentally shot his friend in the chest when he was trying to kill a rival gang member.

These alleged gang members have been terrorizing law-abiding residents who live on their "turf" for far too long. In fact, it was representatives from the local Neighborhood Watch Prevention Councils who approached Oakland law enforcement officials about using court-ordered injunctions, which have been employed in other California cities to help stem gang violence.

The Oakland injunction would prevent the now 15 adults on the list from associating with other North Side gang members (four of the originals are in custody) within a defined geographic "safety zone." The only allowable exceptions would be when members are inside a school attending class, in church, at a place of employment or training, or when attending counseling sessions or community meetings.

The injunction further prohibits intimidating or assaulting witnesses, possessing firearms or other dangerous weapons or engaging in drug use or sales.

It also mandates a 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. curfew.

Violators could be punished by up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a brief opposing the injunction on the grounds that it violates the civil liberties of the named individuals. Others claim the requested order criminalizes youth, and that it would be counterproductive because it would merely drive gang members from one part of the city into another.

First, the order only applies to adults 18 and over, not youth. Second, gang members won't be able to easily set up shop in nearby areas because those sections are controlled by other gangs.

There are valid concerns that an injunction, if misapplied, could trample people's rights.

But we believe Russo understands that it must be carefully monitored.

The injunction Oakland requests is not a blanket, free-for-all that would allow police to massively round up young people. It is a narrowly tailored order that applies to the alleged members of a specific and very dangerous gang — whose members proudly proclaim their affiliation through tattoos and on social media sites.

Those who want to appeal their cases will have the right to do so before a three-member panel.

No one is suggesting that an injunction will solve Oakland's gang problem. Gang injunctions have had mixed results in other cities.

- However, Oakland Police Chief Anthony Batts found them effective when he was chief in Long Beach, which is why he supports using injunctions in Oakland.
- U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder during a recent trip to Oakland, applauded the city's proposed injunction as a creative way to go after gangs and protect communities.

The city returns to court Thursday to argue its case. We urge the court to approve Oakland's request.

Oakland hired an ambitious new police chief in Batts. Now we must give him the crime-fighting tools he's asked for to get the job done.

LOCAL CATHOLICS ADDRESS GANG VIOLENCE BY TAKING PART IN SALINAS MARCH FOR PEACE

By Jennifer Squires

Posted: 03/25/2010 06:33:11 PM PDT

SANTA CRUZ - Holy Cross Catholic Church parishioners are heeding a new call this weekend. A delegation of church-goers will travel to Salinas on Saturday morning to take part in the Stand Up for Peace procession, an antigang violence event organized by the Diocese of Monterey and Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action.

- The march is expected to draw 2,000 participants from three counties. Of those, about 100 will be from Catholic churches in Santa Cruz, Aptos and Watsonville.
- "It's almost like there's this stirring in a pot," said Mary Sue Babb, youth ministry director at Holy Cross. "It's started and it's continuing to raise awareness and gathering support."
- Babb is among about 30 Holy Cross parishioners who will take part in the march. She said she hopes the march will be a positive step to address gang crime, as well as a way to show solidarity with residents of Salinas, where gang issues are more rampant than they are in Santa Cruz County.
- "I think we want to send a clear signal to society that we are concerned and we want to help," said Father Rodolfo Contreras of Holy Cross.
- Led by Bishop Richard Garcia, head of the Diocese of Monterey, the procession will pass sites of recent violence, including the home where a 6-year-old boy was killed by a stray bullet Tuesday night.
 - "I think it's important to see people standing up against something," Babb said. "It's a peaceful protest and witness against something in our society that's wrong. For that reason, there's a sense I've got to be there."
- The event has been in the works since November and during it, Garcia will introduce a four-point strategy for the Catholic community to address gang violence that focus on trust, outreach to youth and prayer.
- "I pray to God we can send a message," said Sabino Lopez, executive director of the Center for Community Advocacy, a COPA member and nonprofit based in Salinas and Watsonville helps farmworkers with housing and health issues. "The violence is not only in Salinas, for that reason it's very important to work together."
- In Santa Cruz, the Holy Cross community was touched by gang violence last fall when 16-year-old Santa Cruz High School student Tyler Tenorio was fatally stabbed in a gang fight. One of the teens with Tenorio when he died was in Babb's confirmation process group and the violence was a "wake-up call" for parishioners.
- "That was very traumatic not just for him, but also for the families of teens in our process," Babb said. "I think there was kind of a sense of 'This doesn't pertain to us' but this brought it home."
- Since then, church leaders met with Santa Cruz police gang investigators to learn more about the city's issues and may bring police back to speak about gangs to parishioners, parishioner Barbara Meister said.
- "Going forward, we've got a lot of ideas," she said, listing off possibilities like after-school tutoring programs perhaps targeting children of monolingual immigrant parents parenting workshops and encouraging other adults within the parish to be involved in the lives of children there.
- "For us it's been a way to build awareness inside our parish," Meister said. "This is an issue that cuts to the core about what Catholics are about. ... The fabric of society is tearing and it's incumbent on all of us to repair it."



Thursday evening, the church had a ceremony to mark the conclusion of a nine-day Novena for Peace and a commemoration of the Feast of the Annunciation, leading up to Holy Week. There also was a special blessing for the parish's delegation to the Salinas procession.

"Part of our response as a Catholic community is prayer," Babb said, "but also the action piece, being willing to stand up and march on Saturday."

Covenant

A four-point strategy Bishop Richard Garcia will launch at Saturday's march:

Connect children and parents with each other and the Catholic Church.

Promote trust between communities and those responsible for public safety, such as police.

Create new healthy activities and environments where young people can relate in healthy ways.

Bring the power of prayer to our work.

SOURCE: COPA.

If You Go-Stand up for Peace procession

WHAT: A march against gang violence to launch strategies for gang crime prevention and public safety in the

WHEN: 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

WHERE: Beginning at Alisal High School, 777 Williams Road, Salinas, and ending at St. Mary of the Nativity Catholic Church, 702 Second Ave., Salinas

WHO: Organized by the Catholic Diocese of Monterey and Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action, or COPA, but open to the public.